

On the Application of

entire seizure of the old gentleman's affections, find himself constrained to go and take a present share of the opulence, and the heirship of the whole, and have his patron to join his pleading that Amelia, or Alicia, or Cecilia, (as the case may be,) may now be willing and be permitted to favour his addresses ? One's indignation is excited at the immoral tendency of such lessons to young readers, who are thus taught to undervalue and reject all sober regular plans for compassing an object, and to muse on improbabilities till they become foolish enough to expect them ; thus betrayed, as an inevitable consequence, into one folly more, that of being melancholy when they find they may expect them in vain. It is unpardonable that these pretended instructors, by example should thus explode the calculations and exertions of manly resolution, destroy the connection between ends and means, and make the rewards of virtue so dependent on chance, that if the reader does not either regard the whole fable with contempt, or promise himself he shall receive the favours of fortune in some similar way, he must close the book with the conviction that he may hang or drown himself as soon as he pleases ; that is to say, unless he has learnt from some other source a better morality and religion than these books will ever teach him.

Another deception in respect to means, is the facility with which fancy passes along the train of them, and reckons to their ultimate effect at a glance, without resting at the successive stages, and considering the labours and hazards of the protracted slow process from each point to the next. If a given number of years are allowed requisite for the accomplishment of an object, the romantic mind vaults from one last day of December to another, and seizes at once the whole product of all the intermediate days, without condescending to recollect that the sun never shone yet on 365 days at once, and that they must be slowly told and laboured one by one. If a favourite plan is to be accomplished by means of a certain large amount of property, which is to be produced from what is at present a very small one, the calculations of a sanguine mind can change shillings into guineas, and guineas into hundreds of pounds, a thousand times faster than, in the actual experiment, those lazy shillings and guineas can be compelled to mount to these higher denominations of value. You remember the noble